

City
Sleuth
Citation

Annual awards on the
landscape and cityscape

Mis

THE BOSTON MISINFORMER

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April 1, 2001

"A Civic Re Vision" for the MassPike



Boston MisInformer rendering by David Bryson

Air Rights—MassPike has proposed a transportation solution that would not only solve the new convention center's access problems from Back Bay hotels, but also would reduce impacts of air rights development, make Boston "world class," raise money to pay for the CA/T project, improve MCAS scores and prevent Dutch Elm disease.

MassPike has contracted with Gondolas R Us, a subsidiary of Monorails R Us, to connect the high-rise spine under design along Turnpike air rights from Back Bay to World Trade Center in South Boston.

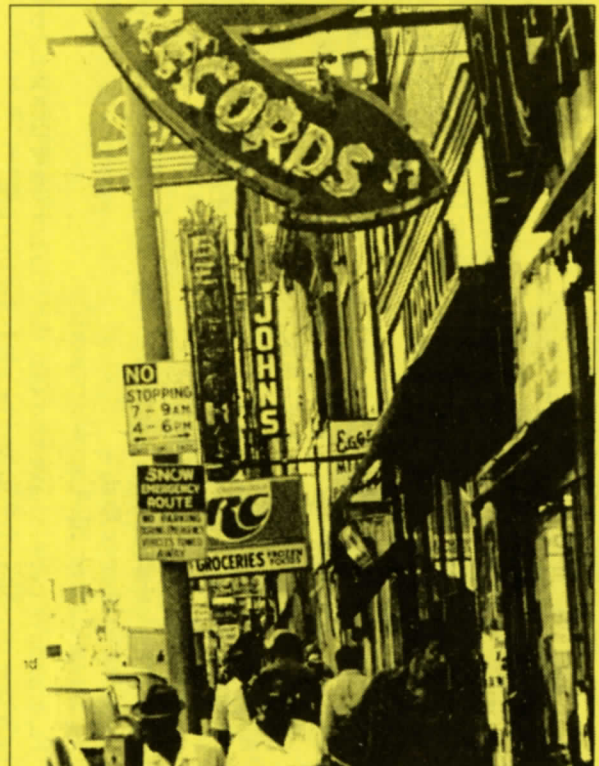
The 75-person gondola cars, similar to those in Rio de Janeiro, will run with 40-second headways between Prudential Tower and World Trade Tower with stops at South Station, Columbus Center, Hancock Tower and Tower Records.

Naming Rights: How to Finance the Public Sector

In the spirit of the latest fad—public/private partnerships—The Boston MisInformer proposes the following:

- **See your name in lights.** Because the mega-corporations targeted by the MBTA have shown no interest in buying the naming rights to MBTA stations, the MBTA should install electronic name boards that would display a passenger's name for only \$10. Unlike static porcelain-on-steel signs, these electronic signs would change when the next train arrives. The more frequent the train service, the more money for the MBTA.
- **Sell naming rights for government buildings.** Instead of naming government office buildings for obscure former bureaucrats (who was Charles Hurley and why is the Division of Employment and Training building named for him?), sell the naming rights. Example: Microsoft Federal Courthouse; Modern Continental State Transportation Building, Pritzker City Hall.
- **Endow public offices.** A new wrinkle would have public offices endowed by private money. This is not a new idea, as professorships in academia and judgeships in Rhode Island benefit from this arrangement. Example: Fleet Governor Swift, Sovereign Speaker of the House Finneran; Citizens Mayor Menino.

Got an idea? Send it to The Boston MisInformer and if it's a good one, we'll claim it as our own and send it to the governor.



Example of financing the public sector on historic Spring Lane.

They Said It!

"There's nowhere else in the country that does something like this."

State Transportation Secretary Kevin Sullivan on the MBTA's new passenger refund policy when the transit is more than 30 minutes late, almost immediately disputed by Marc Littman of Los Angeles County's transit authority, which offers a refund after 15 minutes:
"That's not true."

"You can't come to the Congress and just not know your subject."

Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W. Virginia) on Lt. Gov. Jane Swift's appearance before Congress talking about Internet sales taxes.

"Alex Krieger, the architect, should offer a public apology for his work...."

Boston Globe columnist Brian McGrory on the new "Community Arcade" at City Hall Plaza.

"I don't think the BRA has traditionally been user-friendly, and we're going to change that."

Susan Elsbree, BRA spokesperson.

"Hundreds of people have said that they do not want this theater and only one person in favor, and he's leaving in April."

Chris Fincham, waterfront activist, on surface artery planners catering to MassPike chair Andrew Natsios' call for an amphitheater.

"Actually, what we're seeing so far is no decrease in revenues."

Jonathan Davis, MBTA chief financial officer, regarding the 30 percent fare increase last year. [He also said ridership has increased...so where did the money go?].

"People think we can go to 'Buses R Us' tomorrow and pick that stuff up." MBTA General Manager Robert Prince on problems buying additional buses for extended service.

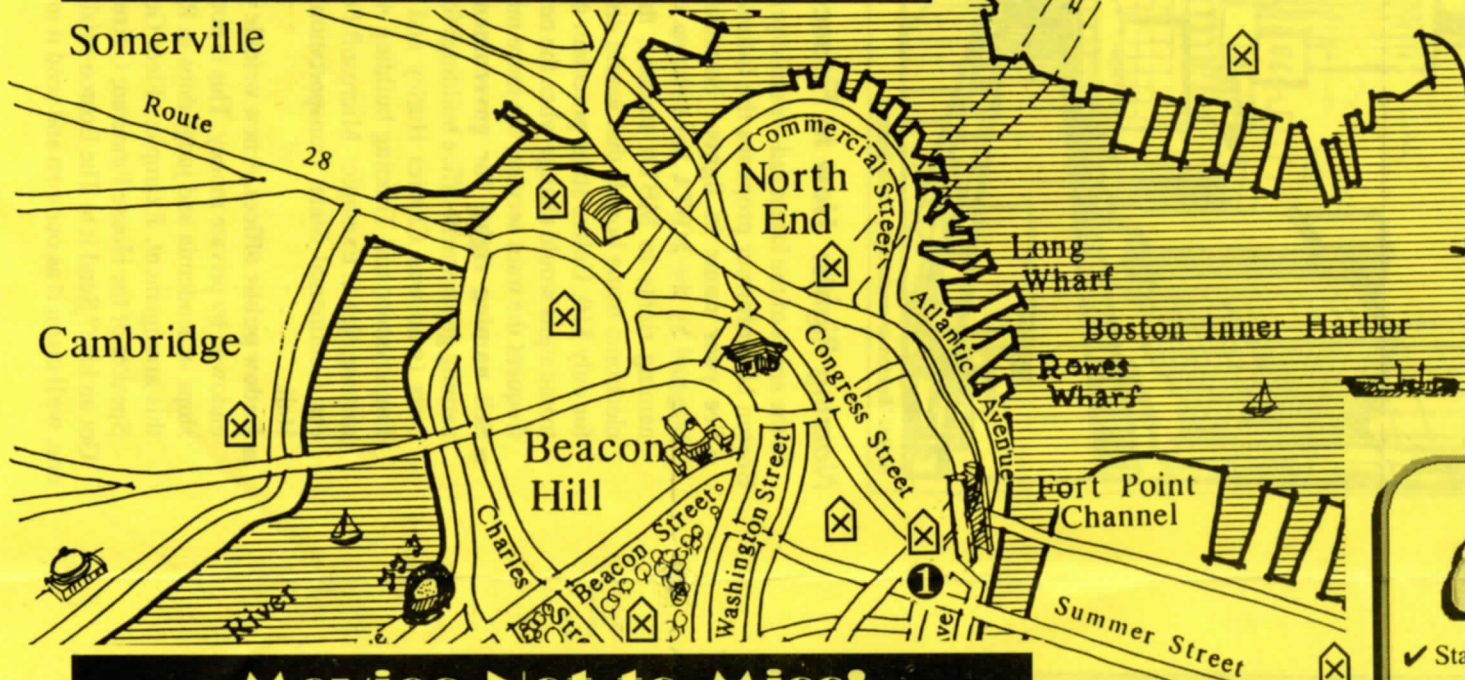
① Ωηατ εστιη φρεθνενηψ, Κεννετη? νοτ προωιδε προτεχτιον φρομ τηε ωεατηερ.

Σεπεραλ μεμβεροφ τηε Χιτς Χουν-χιλ ηαπε Robert Cerasoli χηαλλενηεδ Μαψορ Μενινοεσ ορδερινγη τηε City Hall Plaza τηε Πλαζα ιν ορδερ το ρενοωατε ιτ φρομ Barry Locke, ωηχηη τακεσ τηε αχτιον ιτ νεεδσ το ποτε. Τηε αρχαδε ισ σχηεδυλεδ φορ χομπλετιον.

⊗ = Opportunity site

② Massport tackles housing crunch...Responding with lightning speed to Cardinal Law's call for 36,000 new housing units in the City of Boston, Massport has taken action and will kill two birds with one stone. Massport's new policy of providing cots for stranded air travelers at Logan Airport count toward meeting the Cardinal's goal, because the cots will be permanent fixtures in Logan's terminals as long as runway 14/32 is not built. Massport is considering having cots at Hanscom Field in Bedford so the town could count them toward their affordable housing supply as required by law.

③ In case you missed it...A recent MBTA legal notice is soliciting SUV owners to provide supplemental MBTA service on heavily used routes. The MBTA will pay SUV owners handsomely for the use of their vehicle and a competitive wage to drive them. Interested SUV owners in return must agree to wrap their vehicle in an advertisement for something stupid or tasteless such as Lexus cars or a tits-and-ass movie. The driver must also be willing to listen to two hours per day of public announcements while driving and two hours of Mike Mulhern, operations guy, describe how the Silver Line will eventually run at 40-second frequencies in South Boston. The Carmens Union is thrilled to let someone else drive around in those mobile advertisements.



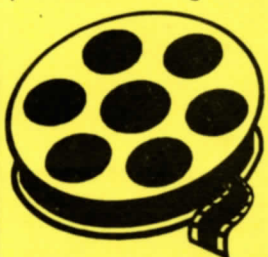
Movies Not to Miss!

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon—a suspense drama about the reactions of the House Speaker and Senate President when Acting Governor Jane Swift takes office.

O Brother, Where Art Thou?—a mystery about the lives of the Bulger family.

The House of Mirth—a documentary about the Boston City Council.

Down to Earth—the tragic tale of how the surface artery ended up when no other plan could be agreed upon.



Traffic—the depressing story of the Boston Transportation Department's heroic battle and loss against its nemesis.

Sweet November—the happy epic of how the whole Kennedy clan prepares to run in the next election.

Cast Away—the inspiring saga of the survival of thousands of people marooned at Logan Airport.

15 Minutes—a documentary about how long it took for Democratic politicians to jump into the race for governor after Joe Kennedy withdrew.

South Boston

West Broadway

Dorchester Street

Headlines You'll Never Read

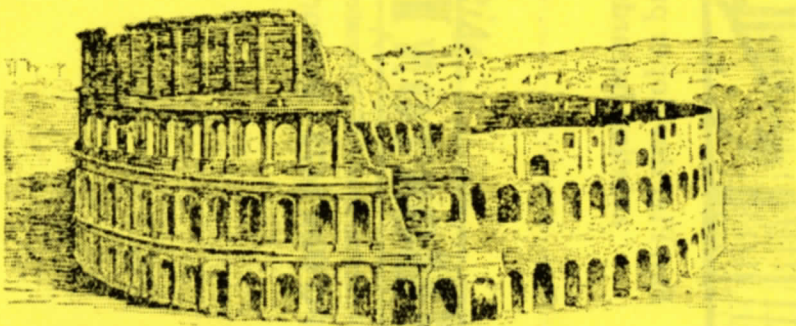
- ✓ State stops work on new Boston convention center pending results of study of demand for convention facilities
- ✓ State Transportation Librarian George Sanborn retires
- ✓ Steve Kaiser appointed to MassPike Board
- ✓ Menino calls for end to shameless privatization
- ✓ South Boston Piers Silver Line exceeds ridership projections
- ✓ Prudential Center owners decide to stop building
- ✓ City hires consultant to help agency personnel identify a bicycle when they see one
- ✓ Final, definitive plan for Surface Artery parcels completed
- ✓ Jim Rooney gets long-service award
- ✓ Central Artery project funds more Environmental Oversight staff for tracking commitments

Surface Artery Planning Goes on and on...

Outgoing MassPike Chairman Andrew Natsios, who is heading to China to teach the builders of the Three Gorges Dam the secrets behind digging tunnels and digging through fiscal mismanagement, feels strongly that the design of the surface artery should include a fountain and a Greco-Roman amphitheater.

After some confusion about Natsios' wishes that caused the MassPike's consultants for the surface parcels to locate water fountains on virtually every parcel, someone realized he meant a large public fountain and removed the water fountains from the plans (too expensive).

While others sweat the details about design—historic or contemporary; broken or operating—and the cost—over budget or under budget—The Boston MisInformer has the answer. At great expense, The Boston MisInformer has produced detailed plans for a low budget fountain (see right) that fits the bill. Unique design, easy to operate, and easy to personalize for the neighborhood it will grace, this fountain is a classic for the surface artery.



The Boston MisInformer also suggests a Roman amphitheater (see left) for the surface artery, particularly suitable because of its proximity to the North End and its historic use for chariot races and gladiator battles. The coliseum model also symbolizes the era of Urban Renewal in which demolition and construction are never complete. Modern motorists, frustrated by the endless traffic jams, can use the amphitheater for drag racing and to vent road rage.

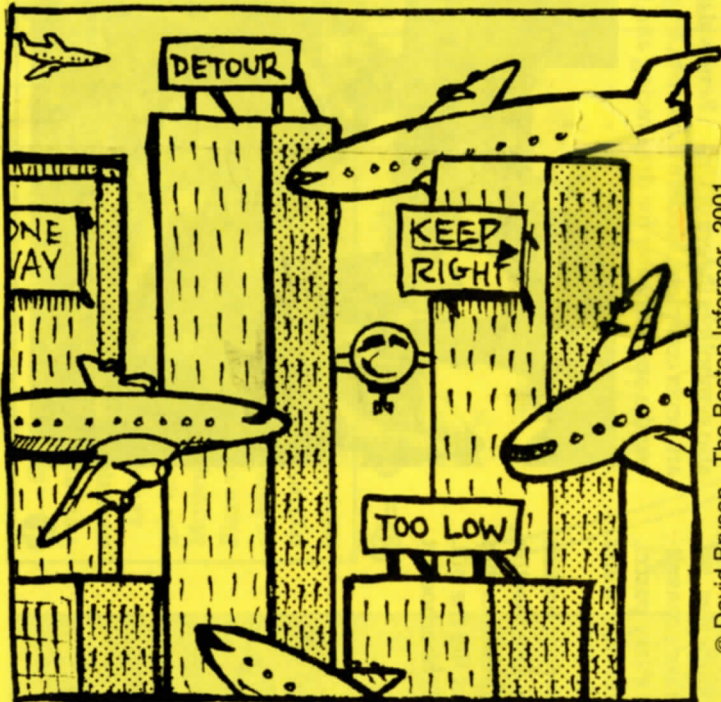


Welcome to The Boston MisInformer,

the annual April Fool's issue of The Boston Informer, an otherwise "serious" newsletter covering development, construction and transportation downtown.

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Fan Pier developer promises to mitigate aviation hazards of its towers

^{Mis} THE **BOSTON INFORMER**

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You were asking...

Q. What is this IAG announced by the BRA?

A. We're not sure, so we asked the Boston MisInformer editorial staff and got these guesses: Incidental Agenda for Gratification, Inactivity Against Greed, Internal Allowance for Goodies, In-the-bag And a Gofer, I Am Gullible.

Q. I think I'm in the wrong business. I heard that the Central Artery/Tunnel project just gave Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff a bonus incentive to cut project costs. Since B/PB runs the show, how will anyone know what's a saving?

A. Good question. The Boston Informer in 1995 reported that the B/PB contract for program management and design came to \$2 billion, 25 percent of the entire Artery cost at the time. B/PB also received its ninth contract extension since starting in 1986, worth \$368.6 million or \$92 million per year, so we wonder how much of an incentive a paltry \$2.5 million per year bonus is to save \$50 million.

Q. Some years ago I heard that there would soon be pay street toilets (like Paris and San Francisco). When are they coming and how will I use them?

A. The schedule calls for installation in 2036 as part of the Boston 400 plan. To use them you will buy tickets at Bostix booths—full price in advance; half-price at time of use.

Q. Why is Washington Street in Lower Roxbury torn up when the MBTA is simply installing bus lanes?

A. This error, discovered in the third change order for the job, happened when the contractor was given 1986 plans—scheme 27A—for light rail to replace the Orange Line by mistake instead of plans for the bus lanes.



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